

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1320

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GY

SUBJ: BURNHAM ON CASTRO, RELATIONS WITH "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES AND
ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT IN CONTEXT NON-ALIGNMENT

SUMMARY: SAW PRIMIN BURNHAM FOR ABOUT HOUR AND A HALF
SATURDAY, SEPT 1, MORE ON HIS INITIATIVE THAN MINE. TOPICS
WHICH AROSE DURING RELAXED, MORE PHILOSOPHICAL THAN
SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION, INCLUDED CURRENT VISIT BY FIDEL CASTRO,
PROSPECTS PRESENCE HERE OF SOVIETS, NORTH KOREANS, EAST GERMANS
AND CUBANS AND NON-ALIGNMENT, SPECIFICALLY ATTITUDES TOWARDS
ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT. CASTRO'S VISIT SERVED PURPOSES BOTH
PRIME MINISTERS ACCORDING BURNHAM. HE SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT
ESTABLISHMENT ADDITIONAL "SOCIALIST" OFFICES GEORGETOWN IN
NEAR FUTURE. WITH RESPECT TO ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT, HE FLATLY
SIDED WITH ARABS ON ISSUE SEIZURE TERRITORY BY FORCE. VENEZUELAN
CLAIMS ON FIVE-EIGHTS GUYANA'S TERRITORY OBVIOUSLY LURKED
IN BACKGROUND OF MANY OF HIS OBSERVATIONS. BURNHAM WAS A BIT
ILL AT EASE, PERHAPS DEFENSIVE, BUT FRIENDLY ENOUGH EVEN
THOUGH DETERMINED AND INTRASIGENT. CONFIDENT INTERNAL
SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

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1. WHEN I LAST SAW PRIMIN BURNHAM TWO DAYS BEFORE
MY DEPARTURE ON LEAVE ON JULY 28, WE AGREED THAT I SHOULD
SEEM HIM BETWEEN MY RETURN THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 31 AND HIS
OWN DEPARTURE ON SEPTEMBER 3 TO ATTEND ALGIERS NON-ALIGNED

SUMMIT MEETING IN ORDER FINALIZE CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS WE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING. ALTHOUGH THE NEED FOR SUCH A MEETING HAD EVAPORATED DURING MY ABSENCE, HE SUGGESTED TO CHARGE THAT I PHONE HIM SATURDAY MORNING. THIS I DID, FINALLY GETTING THRU TO HIM AT HIS COUNTRY RETREAT AT BELFIELD. HE SEEMED UNUSUALLY SUBDUED AND TENTATIVE, BUT WHEN I SAID THERE WAS NOW NO NEED FOR ME TO SEE HIM, I KNEW HE WAS TERRIBLY BUSY PREPARING FOR CASTRO'S VISIT AND HIS TRIP TO ALGIERS, I SIMPLY WANTED TO CHECK IN AND WISH HIM GOD SPEED ETC, HE ABRUPTLY ASKED WHAT I WAS DOING. I WAS READING A PILE OF MAIL AND PAYING BILLS. COULD I GET TO BELFIELD BY NOON. CERTAINLY.

2. I FOUND BURNHAM SOMEWHAT ILL AT EASE, PERHAPS DEFENSIVE. AS OUR CONVERSATION OPENED WITH TALK OF FIDEL CASTRO'S IMMINENT ARRIVAL AND BURNHAM'S PLANS TO FLY TO ALGIERS WITH HIM. BURNHAM SAID THIS SERVED CASTRO'S PURPOSES AS WELL AS HIS OWN. CASTRO WOULD GAIN RESPECTABILITY AND HE WOULD PUT ANOTHER NAIL IN CHEDDI JAGAN'S COFFIN. I COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS EXACTLY WHAT DISTURBED "WASHINGTON"--THAT CASTRO WOULD GAIN RESPECTABILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY. FURTHERMORE, WE WONDERED WHETHER IT WAS WISE FROM BURNHAM'S OWN POINT OF VIEW TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF SO CLOSELY WITH THE CUBAN LEADER, REFERRING TO MY COMMENT A YEAR AGO TO FOREIGN MINISTER RAMPHAL THAT IN ANY RATIONAL TERMS CUBA HAD READ ITSELF OUT OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT BY THE EXCESSES COMMITTED BY RAUL ROA DURING THE GEORGETOWN MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS.

3. BURNHAM ARGUED THAT EVERY HEAD OF GOVT HAD TO DO WHAT HE CONSIDERED BEST FOR HIMSELF AND HIS OWN COUNTRY. HE WAS UNDERCUTTING JAGAN AND ISOLATING HIM FROM HIS FOLLOWERS. FURTHERMORE, BURNHAM SAID HE HOPED TO DEVELOP TRADE. CUBA NEEDED AND WANTED GUYANA'S TIMBER, AND GUYANA COULD NOT OVERLOOK A CHANCE TO SELL SOME TEN MILLION DOLLARS (G) WORTH. AT THE SAME TIME GUYANA NEEDED CEMENT AND COULD NOT FIND RELIABLE SOURCES WHO WOULD QUOTE REASONABLE PRICES. HE EXPECTED CUBA TO DO SO. AS FOR NON-ALIGNMENT, HE WOULD NEVER DO WHAT CASTRO OBVIOUSLY WANTED HIM TO DO, THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBSCRIBE TO THE THEORY THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE SUPER POWER ABOUT WHICH TO WORRY. AFTER ALL, WHO HAD AN EFFECTIVE NUCLEAR CAPACITY AND MIRV'S? HE COULD UNDERSTAND CASTRO'S POSITION IN LIGHT OF HIS TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR BUT WOULD NOT SUPPORT IT. AS HE HAD TOLD ME BEFORE, HE WOULD MUCH PREFER TO DEAL WITH US THAN WITH THE SOVIETS. I OBJECTED TO HIS EQUATING THE US AND THE USSR IN THIS CONTEXT.

4. BURNHAM WENT ON TO OBSERVE AS HE HAD MANY TIMES IN THE PAST THAT OAS POLICY ON CUBA WAS OUT OF DATE AND TOTALLY UNREALISTIC. VENEZUELA WAS ABOUT TO REESTABLISH RELATIONS AND HE OBVIOUSLY HAD TO BEAT CALDERA AND CALVANI TO THE PUNCH. THIS WAS ANOTHER JUSTIFICATION FOR HAVING CASTRO

HERE AND ACCEPTING THE INVITATION TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO ALGIERS. THERE WAS NO INTERNAL PROBLEM AS THE CUBANS WERE BEING TOTALLY CORRECT. FOR EXAMPLE, CASTRO'S ADVANCE PARTY HAD ASKED CLEARANCE TO SEE JAGAN. GOG HAD CONCURRED AND ARRANGEMENTS MADE THROUGH MOFA. (APPARENTLY THEY ONLY SAW JANET JAGAN, WHO ARGUED UNSUCCESSFULLY THAT CASTRO SHOULD NOT COME TO GUYANA AND THUS BETRAY HIS TRUE FRIENDS HERE.) IN ANY EVENT, BURNHAM SAID HE STILL BELIEVED, AS HE HAD TOLD ME MANY TIMES, THAT THE US WOULD SOON SEEK AN ACCOMMODATION WITH CASTRO. I ASSURED HIM I HAD SEEN "NO CRACKS IN THE WALL." WE THEN ARGUED ABOUT CUBA FOR A TIME AS WE HAVE DONE INTERMINABLY IN THE PAST.

5. BURNHAM THEN REFERRED TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE CHARGE REGARDING THE USSR'S PURPORTED DECISION NOT TO ESTABLISH A PRESENCE HERE, SURMISING THAT THIS DECISION HAD BEEN BASED ON PIQUE OVER THE GOG'S REFUSAL TO ALLOW IT TO HAVE SEPARATE TRADE AND EMBASSY OFFICES, EACH WITH ITS OWN FACILITIES, AND THE GOG'S INSISTENCE ON LIMITING SOVIET PERSONNEL TO BE ASSIGNED RATHER THAN ON REASONS OF ECONOMY AS THE SOVIETS HAD ALLEGED. I JOSHED HIM AND EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD BE HERE SOONER OR LATER. HE RETORTED "I WOULD EXPECT IT TO BE LATER RATHER THAN SOONER." I SAID PERHAPS THEY WOULD LOOK TO THE NORTH KOREANS, THE EAST GERMANS AND OR THE CUBANS TO DO THEIR WORK FOR THEM. DID HE EXPECT ANY OF THESE TO HAVE A PRESENCE HERE? HE REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE AND WENT OFF ON A TIME-CONSUMING AND PROBABLY DELIBERATELY EVASIVE DISCUSSION OF THE ROLES OF BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA
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AND POLAND AS SOVIET TOOLS. (HE PUT THEM IN THAT ORDER.) NORTH KOREA, HE CLAIMED, WAS SHOWING INCREASING INDEPENDENCE. THE EAST GERMANS WERE NO LONGER PRESSING FOR A PRESENCE, PERHAPS AS A RESULT OF BRANDT'S OSTPOLITIC ALTHOUGH HE STILL HOPED TO DEVELOP PROFITABLE TRADE REALTIONS. CUBA WOULD ESTABLISH AN EMBASSY IN JAMAICA, HE ASSERTED, WHOSE AMBASSADOR WOULD BE ACCREDITED HERE. IN TURN, GUYANA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER IN KINGSTON WOULD BE ACCREDITED TO HAVANA. AFTER ALL, IT WAS CUBA WHO HAD SUGGESTED LAST YEAR THAT RELATIONS BE ON A NON-RESIDENT BASIS. HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY CHANGE.

6. LITTLE MORE WAS SAID ON NON-ALIGNMENT, ALTHOUGH BURNHAM DID SAY HE WAS INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN DEVELOPMENT AND UNCOMPROMISINGLY BEHIND THE ARAB CAUSE IN CONDEMNING ISRAEL'S SEIZURE OF TERRITORY BY FORCE, NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE MIGHT ADMIRE ISRAELI SUCCESSES IN "MAKING THE DESERT BLOOM." THIS LED TO A MILD ARGUMENT ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST, IN THE COURSE OF WHICH BURNHAM DREW AN ANALOGY WITH A HYPOTHETICAL SEIZURE BY VENEZUELA OF THE GUYANESE TERRITORY IT CLAIMS.

7. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD HAD ANY CONCERNS OVER LEAVING THE

COUNTRY AT THIS TIME, HAVING IN MIND JAGAN'S VARIOUS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE CIVIL STRIFE AND STRANGLE THE ECONOMY. BURNHAM SAID THERE MIGHT BE SOME PROBLEMS, "BUT NOTHING PTOLO RIED (ACTING PRIME MINISTER DR. PTOLOMY RIED) CANT HANDLE AS WELL AS I."

8. AS WE PARTED BURNHAM SAID MAYBE THE ILLYUSHIN WOULD NOT MAKE IT TO ALGIERS. IN WHICH CASE THE US WOULD BE RID OF ITS THREE MOST VEXATIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE CARIBBEAN. I SAID THIS WAS NOT HOW WE WOULD HOPE TO SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS AND WISHED HIM A SAFE JOURNEY.
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